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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY EA/K:EHURWITZ:CHG
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY
EA - AMB. HUMMEL
P - MR HABIB
S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN
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O 272010Z AUG 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 213541

NODIS
CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PARK
REF; SEOUL 6741
1. YOU SHOULD CALL ON PRESIDENT PARK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND TELL HIM THAT UNDER INSTRUCTIONS YOU ARE REPLYING TO HIS COMMENTS TO YOU ON AUGUST 27.

2. YOU SHOULD TELL PARK THAT WE ARE DISMAYED BY HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH OUR MOVES VIS-A-VIS NORTH KOREA AND FIND HIS POSITION DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE AUGUST 18 INCIDENT WE TOOK A NUMBER OF MEASURES (DEFCON 3, DEPLOYMENT OF F-4S AND F-111S, MOVEMENT OF MIDWAY TASK FORCE, B-52 FLIGHTS) WHICH DEMONSTRATED TO THE NORTH KOREANS AND TO THE WORLD THAT WE WOULD NOT TOLERATE SUCH NORTH KOREAN PROVOCATIONS OR PERMIT PYONGYANG TO ESCALATE THE INCIDENT INTO A THREAT AGAINST THE SOUTH. IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE MOVES, WE MOUNTED THE TREE-CUTTING OPERATION -- ANOTHER CLEAR-CUT WARNING TO
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THE NORTH THAT WE WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY ENCROACHMENT ON

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OUR RIGHTS OR THREAT TO THE SOUTH.

3. THE NORTH KOREANS HAVE CLEARLY BEEN TAKEN ABACK.

MILITARILY, THEY HAVE DONE LITTLE MORE THAN TAKE DE-
FENSIVE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST OUR BUILD-UP. IN THE JSA
THEY STOOD BY AND WATCHED THE TREE-CUTTING WITHOUT
RAISING A FINGER. KIM IL-SUNG HAS SENT AN APOLOGETIC
MESSAGE ON THE AUGUST 18 INCIDENT. THEIR WHOLE AT-
TITUDE IN RECENT MEETINGS IN THE JSA HAS BEEN SUBDUED
AND BUSINESS-LIKE. THEIR PROPOSAL TO DISMATLE THEIR
GUARD POSTS ON OUR SIDE IS ANOTHER BACKDOWN.
4. THIS RECORD SHOWS THAT IT WAS OUR SIDE WHICH TOOK
IMMEDIATE AND RESOLUTE ACTIONS AND THE NORTH KOREAN
SIDE WHICH BACKED DOWN. WE THUS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO
UNDERSTAND PARK'S VIEW THAT WE HAVE SOMEHOW MADE CON-
CESSIONS TO PYONGYANG.

5. YOU SHOULD TELL PARK THAT IN OUR HANDLING OF THIS
INCIDENT, WE HAVE PROVED THE VIABILITY OF OUR MUTUAL
DEFENSE TREATY AND DEMONSTRATED A RAPID CAPACITY TO
AUGMENT OUR FORCES MASSIVELY. THIS SHOULD BE A SOURCE
OF GREAT SATISFACTION TO PARK AND TO THE KOREAN PEOPLE,
RATHER THAN BEING THE OCCASION FOR THE KIND OF CRITICISM
NOW BEING VOICED.

6. YOU SHOULD POINT OUT TO PARK THAT IN HIS CONVERSATION
ON AUGUST 19 WITH GENERAL STILWELL, HE CAUTIONED AGAINST
OVERREACTING AND PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THE NORTH
KOREANS. IN HIS MEETING THE NEXT DAY WITH STILWELL AND
STERN HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE FIRM POSITION
BEING TAKEN BY THE USG AND FOCUSSED ON THE TREE-CUTTING
OPERATION AS A PLAN WHICH WOULD SHOW THE KIND OF FIRM-
NESS AND RESOLVE THAT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY PYONGYANG.
HE ALSO CAUTIONED AGAINST ESCALATING THE INCIDENT UNLESS
NORTH DID SO. THE FACT THAT CONFRONTATION WITH
PYONGYANG NOW SEEMS TO HAVE PLAYED OUT ALONG LINES PARK
HIMSELF CONSIDERED DESIRABLE MAKES HIS RECENT COMMENTS
EVEN MORE PERPLEXING. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY REPORT, PARK
SAID THAT IF NORTH DID NOT RESPOND TO TREE CUTTING BY
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ESCALATING' THEN THE MATTER WOULD BE DROPPED.

7. WITH SPECIFIC RESPECT TO PARK'S INSISTENCE ON FURTHER
ACTION AGAINST NORTH KOREA, YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT
OUR FIRM RESPONSE TO DATE HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO PYONGYANG
AND THE WORLD THAT WE ARE FULLY PREPARED TO DEFEND THE
SOUTH AGAINST NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION AND TO GUARANTEE
THE UNC'S ABILITY TO OPERATE UNDER THE TERMS OF THE

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ARMISTICE AGREEMENT. PYONGYANG, FOR ITS PART, HAS INDICATED THAT IT HAS GOTTEN THIS MESSAGE. TO UNDERTAKE ADDITIONAL PUNITIVE MEASURES THROUGH THE USE OF FORCE

AT THIS TIME WITHOUT FURTHER NORTH KOREAN PROVOCATION WOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE UNITED STATES AND BY WORLD OPINION. PARK MUST BE LED TO APPRECIATE THAT WE HAVE BROAD CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. OUR ACTIONS HAVE BEEN UNDERSTOOD AND SUPPORTED, AND WE WANT TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. THIS IS IN PARK'S INTEREST AS WELL.
IN ADDITION, PARK OBVIOUSLY KNOWS THAT PYONGYANG WILL TRY TO PORTRAY US AS THE AGGRESSOR DURING THE FORTHCOMING UNGA. TO TAKE FURTHER MEASURES THROUGH USE OF FORCE AT THIS TIME MIGHT PLAY INTO THEIR HANDS AND RISK LOSING THE APPROVAL WE HAVE WON SO FAR IN THE HANDLING OF THIS INCIDENT.

8. WITH REGARD TO PHASE DOWN OF U.S. AUGMENTATION MEASURES, YOU MAY TELL PARK THAT CURRENT B-52 FLIGHTS WILL END ON AUGUST 29, ALTHOUGH ADDITIONAL FLIGHTS ARE PLANNED ON INTERMITTENT BASIS AFTER THAT. WITH REGARD TO OTHER FORCES, THEY WILL CLEARLY HAVE TO BE REDEPLOYED OUT OF KOREA, ALTHOUGH THIS OBVIOUSLY WILL NOT HAPPEN IF PYONGYANG TAKES ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO MAKE SUCH DEPLOYMENT UNWISE. HOW AND OVER WHAT TIME PERIOD THIS REDEPLOYMENT WILL TAKE PLACE WILL BE DISCUSSED WITH THE ROKG.

9. FYI: WE ARE NOT PLEASED WITH PARK'S ATTITUDE. YOU SHOULD MAKE ABOVE POINTS FIRMLY AND NOT ALLOW ANY INNUENDOES ABOUT LACK OF U.S. RESOLVE GO UNANSWERED. REALIZE SOME OF ABOVE FOLLOWS WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY
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SAID, BUT THIS TIME YOU ARE TALKING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS.
END FYI.

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